

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 154

RESOLUTION CHAPTER 122

Assembly Concurrent Resolution No. 154—Relative to pupil instruction.

[Filed with Secretary of State August 21, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

ACR 154, Gray. Modesto City Schools: World Geography-World Religions class.

This measure would acknowledge and applaud the Modesto City Schools' initiative and achievement in teaching the unique World Geography-World Religions class as a grade 9 required course for the last 15 years, and would recommend that the class be considered for adoption by other school districts in the state.

WHEREAS, The United States Declaration of Independence states that all men are created equal, and the Holy Sikh Scriptures contain hymns like, "One Father, and we are children of the One" and "Recognize ye, all Humanity as the Same"; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism has 25 million followers, and is the fifth largest world religion after Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism; and

WHEREAS, Nearly 300,000 residents of California are Sikhs, who, by the dint of their hard work, have distinguished themselves in all fields, as documented in Resolution Chapter 161 of the Statutes of 2010, Resolution Chapter 60 of the Statutes of 2012, and Resolution Chapter 105 of the Statutes of 2013; and

WHEREAS, Sikhism was founded in Northwestern India by Guru Nanak (1469-1539) and is not a branch of another religion, and Sikhs now have global distribution with Gurdwaras in more than 72 countries; and

WHEREAS, Large numbers of Americans are physically or psychologically attacked on the basis of their race, skin color, ethnicity, physical or mental abilities, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, religion, culture, or age; and

WHEREAS, Turbaned Sikh children experience bullying at more than double the national rate; and

WHEREAS, The 115-member Community Safe Schools Committee of Modesto met for 14 months and presented in 1998 a set of principles affirming respect for all; and, since 1999, the Modesto City Schools has engaged in the nation's most direct experiment in using the public school curriculum to promote respect for religious freedom and diversity; and

WHEREAS, The Modesto City Schools' World Geography-World Religions class examines the geographical location, history, culture, and

major beliefs of Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam; and

WHEREAS, The nine character traits of responsibility and respect, which are courage, honesty, loyalty, respect, responsibility, civility, compassion, initiative, and perseverance, are stressed throughout the class, and pupils are taught how to make appropriate comments without offending other pupils; and

WHEREAS, The class has been very successful in helping Sikh pupils feel more accepted and in helping pupils understand their First Amendment rights, understand and practice the character traits of respect and responsibility, become informed about the religious diversity in their community and the world, and obtain greater understanding about the six major world religions; and

WHEREAS, The Modesto City Schools is perhaps the only school district in the state that requires all pupils to learn about and understand world religions; now, therefore, be it

Resolved by the Assembly of the State of California, the Senate thereof concurring, That the Legislature acknowledges and applauds the Modesto City Schools' initiative and achievements in teaching the unique World Geography-World Religions class as a grade 9 required course for the last 15 years, and recommends that the class be considered for adoption by other school districts in the state; and be it further

Resolved, That the Chief Clerk of the Assembly transmit copies of this resolution to the author for appropriate distribution to the Members of the Legislature, the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the county superintendents of schools for transmission to all school district superintendents, and other interested organizations or persons.